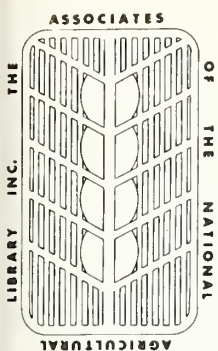


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# ASSOCIATES NATIONAL TODAY

NEW SERIES VOL. 2, NO. 2

SEPTEMBER 1977



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

The Associates of the National Agricultural  
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Cover photo: *Carol Tucker Foreman* taking the oath of office as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services, March 25, 1977, at the White House [photo by *Joe Valbuena*; courtesy Office of Communication, USDA]

Guest editor of this issue is *Vivian Wiser, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250.*

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CONTENTS

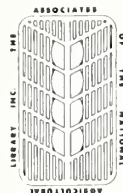
Editorial Reflections, <i>Angelina J. Carabelli</i> . . . . .	3
Introduction, <i>Vivian Wiser</i> . . . . .	7
The Ladies' Department of the <u>American Farmer</u> , 1825-1830: A Locus for the Advocacy of Family Health and Exercise, <i>Jack W. Berryman and Joann Brislin</i> . . . . .	8
Rural Women, <i>Cornelia Butler Flora</i> . . . . .	16
Labor Force Characteristics of Nonmetropolitan Women, <i>Jeanne M. O'Leary</i> . . . . .	22
Women in Agriculture: A Review of the Literature, <i>Darla Fera</i> . . . .	28
Book Reviews . . . . .	32
News Notes, <i>Judy Ho and Donna Jean Mason</i> . . . . .	34

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*Willie Ann Harris, 19, Calhoun County, Ala., daughter of Wilbur G. Harris, with the pheasant she won in a 4-H Club essay contest. At the time, she was a freshman at Jacksonville Teachers College. N-1518 Forsythe April, 1941 (Courtesy U.S.D.A. Photograph)*



## EDITORIAL

## REFLECTIONS

### Beginnings . .

#### EDITORIAL REFLECTIONS

##### Beginnings

Women of the United States  
Department of Agriculture Library  
(USDA Library) Contributors  
to Its Basic Concepts and Progress,  
1877-1942

Perhaps this editorial should be entitled: Nostalgia, Appreciation and Pride.

The women of the USDA Library who were responsible for the firm foundation upon which the largest agricultural library was built are many.

The first woman to head the USDA Library was Ernestine H. Stevens,<sup>1</sup> who served as Department Librarian from 1877-1893. She was one of the victims of Secretary Morton's drives for economy and soon found herself in a subordinate position as assistant to the new librarian W. P. Cutter, a friend of John Dewey, who had developed the Dewey decimal system. But soon she was replaced from that position by Josephine Clark.

Josephine Clark had come to USDA in 1891 as a bibliographer and in October 1893 became assistant librarian. When Cutter resigned as librarian he "very strongly" advised that she be promoted in his place and added: "I do not believe her sex would handicap her usefulness in the slightest degree." Miss Clark served from 1901 until 1907 when she resigned to direct the library of Smith College, her alma mater.

I remember her successor, Claribel R. Barnett, well. She had come to the Library in 1895 and served as the head of the Library from 1917 until her retirement in 1940. She was a soft spoken, extremely capable person, as a scholar, administrator and speaker, who in her quiet manner demanded respect and cooperation. Never too busy to consult with her assistants--to advise, encourage and to help when necessary--she served on the Library committee of the Joint Congressional Commission on Reclassification which drew up the grade system for librarians in the federal service. She was active as an officer in professional library groups and the Agricultural History Society. In accepting her resignation in 1940, Secretary Henry A. Wallace wrote: "You have given the Department many years of devoted and loyal service.... You have built a library in the Department of Agriculture which has high standing among the libraries of the Nation.... You have left a definite mark upon the Department's work and it is a mark of distinction."

Miss Barnett's Assistant Librarian was Miss Emma B. Hawks, who served the Library for forty-five years. Miss Hawks was Chief of Reading and Reference Services in addition to her duties as Assistant Department Librarian. Her retirement, also, on November 15, 1940, was a vital loss to library users and to agricultural librarianship. Secretary Wallace recognized her contributions when he wrote accepting her request for retirement: "The Department appreciates the years of splendid service you have given in library work. With Miss Barnett you have built a splendid institution, one which is invaluable to the work of this Department which has grown and steadily broadened its influence and value."

Miss Hawks was one of the writer's favorite people, rather austere in appearance, but with an unusual kindly and understanding nature. A personal characteristic was a black velvet ribbon which she always wore around her neck with a seemingly endless number of lovely quaint brooches fastening the ribbon under her chin. Miss Hawks' wealth of subject knowledge, her most generous spirit of service and helpfulness made her replacement a difficult task.

Alice Cary Atwood came to the USDA Library as a cataloger in 1904; her scholarly interest and application to work in hand indicated her potential ability as a bibliographer. In 1906 she was transferred to the Bureau of Plant Industry. In a short time she became one of the leaders in the Department's botanical bibliographical efforts.

In collaboration with Marjorie F. Warner and Eunice Rockwood Oberly<sup>2</sup> at first, and then later in charge of the botanical bibliographical project she worked to develop the *Plant Science Catalog* of the USDA Library, which was initiated in 1896 but not begun until 1903. Miss Atwood's contribution to the Catalog from 1906 through the forties is actually the history of this important undertaking.

In 1945 she was the joint recipient with Sydney F. Blake of the Eunice Rockwood Oberly Award for

...Geographical floras of the world, an annotated list with special reference to useful and common plant names. Compiled by Sydney F. Blake, Bureau of Plant Industry and Alice Cary Atwood, U.S. Department of Agriculture Library. U.S. Department of Agriculture Miscellaneous Publication no. 501, 336 p. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1942.<sup>3</sup>

Miss Atwood was most successful in developing assistants in the work of the *Plant Science Catalog*. Ralph R. Shaw stated: "Never did the catalog become to her or her staff an end in itself, and the result has been a tool of ever increasing usefulness...."<sup>4</sup> She also published bibliographies on orchid literature, state and local floras and many others. Miss Atwood retired during fiscal year 1943.

Mention should be made of Lydia K. Wilkins, Chief, Periodical Division since 1916, on extended leave from February 28, 1940, until her retirement on November 16, 1941; Helen M. Thompson, Chief, Catalog and Order Division since 1916, retired on November 20, 1940; Gertrude E. Upton, came to the Library in 1905, was chief, Loan Division, until she was appointed to fill the vacancy of Helen M. Thompson as Acting Chief, Catalog and Records Division. (She retired in 1947 after 42 years of service.)

#### Women in USDA Branch Libraries

In general, the major type of organization in USDA after 1900 was the bureau. Each was an individual unit, at times widely separated physically from the other parts of USDA. A number of them had their own libraries, funded by their respective agency appropriations.

Miss Barnett saw that greater cooperation was needed. The special knowledge of the Bureau librarians could be pooled if they became part of an integrated system. The combined effort would do much toward placing the indexing, bibliographical work of the Department on a satisfactory basis.

In 1911 the Bureau, Division and Office libraries became branches of the USDA Library, under the jurisdiction and supervision of the main library. There was an almost immediate evidence of the fact that

library service was improving through the increased cooperation between the branches and the main library.

Following is a listing of the branches and their librarians at the time of the 1911 transfer and at the time of consolidating with the main library during the 1940-1942 centralization of all USDA libraries (field libraries excluded).

#### Bureau, Division, and Office Libraries

Bureau of Biological Survey  
T. S. Palmer  
Bureau of Chemistry  
Anne E. Draper  
Bureau of Entomology  
Mabel E. Colcord

Miss Mabel E. Colcord became the librarian of the Bureau of Entomology in 1904 and remained there until her retirement in 1942. I was associated with her from 1926-1940 and remember her as an energetic person with astounding knowledge, a rare ready sense of humor and ability to construct rhymes and poetry on the spot.

Ralph R. Shaw, Librarian from 1940 to 1954, described it thus: "...her work is not just a task to be done but an integral part of her life....There are two things that any user who came in contact with Miss Colcord soon learned to expect, namely expert service and a merry quip to spice it...."<sup>5</sup>

Under Miss Colcord's direction the Department's Entomological Collection became the world's finest. When Nathan Banks left the Bureau of Entomology in 1915, Miss Colcord, in addition to her duties as librarian, assumed the compilation of the well known *Index to American Economic Entomology*, which continued under her direction for over twenty-five years.

Forest Service  
Helen E. Stockbridge

Her detailed knowledge of the development of forestry, her zest, interest in the work and her willingness to serve and assist all who came to her with their problems identified her intimately with the progress in forestry. After her death in 1932 the vacancy was filled by Mrs. Helen Moore Todd, who resigned in 1936. Mrs. Mildred B. Williams was appointed to succeed her as Librarian of the Forest Service Branch Library.

Bureau of Plant Industry  
Eunice R. Oberly

Miss Oberly began her USDA Library career in 1900. After a few years of bibliographical work she was appointed Librarian of the Division of Vegetable Physiology and Pathology. In 1908 the Division Library and that of the Office of Botanical Investigations were consolidated to form the Bureau of Plant Industry Library. Miss Oberly specialized in phytopathological subjects. The Eunice Rockwood Oberly Memorial Award to perpetuate her memory, offered for bibliographic efforts in the field of agriculture and related sciences, is presented biennially by the American Library Association.<sup>6</sup>

Miss Jessie M. Allen, assistant librarian, administered the affairs of the Bureau and on May 16, 1922, Miss Marjorie F. Warner, who had been for nineteen years the head of the bibliographical projects of the Office of Economic and Systematic Botany, was appointed to the position of Bureau Librarian. Miss Warner resigned on June 20, 1923. Miss Jessie M. Allen, recognized for her superior services in the field of plant sciences literature, was appointed as the Bureau's Librarian. (She retired in 1947 after 37 years of outstanding service.)

Branch Libraries Consolidated with USDA Department Library in 1940-1942 Centralization of USDA Libraries

Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering  
Mrs. Dorothy W. Graf  
Agricultural Economics  
Mary D. Lacy

Mary G. Lacy first came to the USDA Library as a student summer assistant in 1904. She returned to the USDA Library in 1921. Then the libraries of the Bureau of Markets and Crop Estimates and Office of Farm Management were combined into that of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Miss Lacy was appointed BAE Librarian on August 1, 1923.<sup>7</sup> She served as Assistant Department Librarian in the early 1940's. Miss Lacy was vivacious with boundless energy and patience. Under her direction the BAE Library became the largest of the Bureau libraries, developing bibliographic techniques and an outstanding bibliographical staff. She and her staff were five time recipients of the Eunice Rockwood Oberly Award.<sup>8</sup>

Ralph R. Shaw wrote this of Mary Lacy: "...her never ending search for better ways to do everything that should or should not be done have been sources of unending inspiration to all of us. And her assistance, to me, as new librarian coming into this complex institution in helping me obtain the necessary background quickly and accurately...is a debt that cannot readily be repaid...."<sup>9</sup> Miss Lacy retired during fiscal year 1943.

Other Branch Libraries

BAE Cotton Marketing  
Emily L. Day  
Animal Industry  
Mary F. Thompson  
Beltsville Branch  
Dorris A. Brown  
Commodity Exchange Administration  
Mrs. C. Louise Phillips-Corbett  
Dairy Industry  
Carrie B. Sherfy  
Entomology and Plant Quarantine  
Mabel E. Colcord  
Bee Culture Branch  
Ethel L. Coon  
Experiment Stations  
Cora L. Feldkamp  
Fertilizer Research  
Mrs. Lee Garby  
Forest Service  
Mrs. Mildred B. Williams

Home Economics  
Mrs. Mamie F. Nystrom  
Plant Industry  
Jessie M. Allen  
Soil Conservation Service  
Mildred C. Benton

Miss Benton was appointed the Bureau Librarian on January 16, 1935. Formerly she was an assistant in the Division of Cotton Marketing, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and she also had experience in the Main Library. She served as the Coordinator of Bureau Libraries during the Centralization 1940-1942, and as Chief Library Services. When Ralph R. Shaw, Department Librarian since 1940, joined the United States Army on June 3, 1944, Miss Benton was named Acting Department Librarian. She submitted the Annual U.S. Department of Agriculture Library Reports to the Secretary of Agriculture for fiscal years 1943-1944 and 1944-1945.

Nostalgia, Appreciation and Pride!

Nostalgia: Because these outstanding women took me under their protection, counseling, training, developing, always interested in any extracurricular activities, always sympathetic where "things did not go too well," with a pat on the back, and a cheerful "better luck next time!"

Appreciation: It would have been an impossibility to have been associated with these women without a life long appreciation not only for their abilities, but also for their genuine concern for their staffs.

Pride: The writer is exceedingly proud to have had the opportunity to have known, to have been developed and trained by these leaders of their profession--proud to have begun her career as a Grade 3 Library Assistant in the Bureau of Entomology Branch Library at the USDA Library.

Angelina J. Carabelli,  
*Editorial Consultant*

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(Courtesy G. W. Ackerman, Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

## WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

### INTRODUCTION

The theme, women in American agriculture, is attracting increasing attention from rural women, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and related disciplines, as well as from the agricultural press and the United States Department of Agriculture.

This issue of *Associates NAL Today* brings together the views of several representatives from these fields. Miss Carabelli's reminiscences cover one of the traditional areas of employment where women formerly faced little competition with men in advancing to top jobs in the agency.

Life of the rural woman at the time the *American Farmer* began its "Ladies' Department" and its editor wrote of women's participation in agricultural affairs varied widely from one part of the country to another just as agriculture was diversified. One would wonder how many women actually had access to the column. Nonetheless, the "Department," as described by Berryman and Brislin, covered such subjects as family health, her interest in her husband's diversions, child care, and her duties as wife.

In recent years, especially after International Women's Year (1975), a number of agricultural journals have given greater attention to women in agriculture and the increasingly important role they are taking. These are supplemented by special publications for women such as *Farm Wife News*. A number of articles on the subject are also appearing in professional journals, reflecting the interest of non-farm women.

Jeanne M. O'Leary, a labor economist in USDA's Economic Research Service, in "Labor Force Characteristics of Nonmetropolitan Women," compares male and female participation in the labor picture--differentiating between the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan sectors. She describes the impact of rural development on employment, as well as earnings and types of jobs held by women.

"Rural Women," by Cornelia Butler Flora, gives a sociologist's view of the traditional role, how it has changed especially since World War II--their participation in production, attitudes toward marriage and raising a family, and rural life styles. The result has been to break down the differences between farm and non-farm people but still leaving the rural women more conservative in some of their attitudes.

The review of literature on women in agriculture by Darla Fera, formerly historical research assistant in USDA, will be of particular interest to librarians and those engaged in research in the field. Her detailed bibliography is being published by the National Agricultural Library.

Vivian Wiser, Historian  
Economic Research Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

THE LADIES' DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN FARMER, 1825-1830;  
A LOCUS FOR THE ADVOCACY OF FAMILY HEALTH AND EXERCISE

by

Jack W. Berryman and Joann Brislin\*

Pioneer agriculturally oriented periodicals such as the *Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's Magazine* (Elizabethtown, N.J., 1789), the *Farmer's Library* (Louisville, Ky., 1801), the *Medical and Agricultural Register* (Boston, Mass., 1806), and the *Agricultural Museum* (Georgetown, D.C., 1810) led the procession of magazines for American tillers of the land. By 1850, the treatment of agricultural practices became a dominant feature of the specialized magazine industry.<sup>1</sup> However, being short-lived was a common characteristic of the periodical publishing field in general and the early agricultural journals were no exception.<sup>2</sup> This trend was altered, though, by the appearance of John Stuart Skinner's Baltimore-based *American Farmer* in 1819.

Skinner, who was the postmaster of Baltimore and a well-known public figure, launched his new eight page weekly publication in April and, unlike its predecessors, the *American Farmer* became a permanent and enduring publication with a wide circulation.<sup>3</sup> From the beginning, the editor claimed the magazine would include "original and selected essays and extracts calculated for amusement or instruction, and substantial details of passing occurrences . . ."<sup>4</sup> Skinner was deeply concerned with all aspects of farmers' lives and their interrelationships with society at large whereas other editors both before and after him tended to treat more purely technical agricultural matters. Accordingly, Skinner's philosophy was reflected in the contents of the *American Farmer*.<sup>5</sup>

Because of Skinner's desire to meet the needs of his entire readership, his devotion to improving the life of the agriculturist, his personal love for sports of all kinds, and his belief in the values of exercise, he readily included materials pertaining to sports and pastimes and items of special interest to female readers. From its inception, the *American Farmer* included information dealing with the role of sports and amusements in the life of the farmer and articles frequently appeared extolling the healthful virtues of outdoor exercise.<sup>6</sup> For the ladies, Skinner generally included advice on recipes, clothing, raising children, and other household hints.<sup>7</sup> Both topics received continual support from Skinner and the readership during the first five years of publication and in January, 1825, the sporting news became concentrated in a novel permanent section called the "Sporting Olio."<sup>8</sup> Nine months later in September, the "Ladies' Department" was inaugurated to better serve the important female segment of subscribers.<sup>9</sup>

A special section like the "Ladies' Department" was a unique feature for any periodical during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and was generally ahead of its time in relation to the American woman's struggle for equality. Skinner was well aware of this and wrote in early 1826 that he planned to continue setting aside a portion of his journal "for the rational amusement and instruction of our female readers."<sup>10</sup>

Three months later, Skinner was once again compelled to state his position on the place of the "Ladies' Department" in the *American Farmer* and to remark upon its content:

Our views are much mistaken by those, if there be any, who suppose that in appropriating a certain proportion of this journal to the peculiar instruction and entertainment of our female readers, it was our design to fill that portion with frivolous love-sick poetry, descriptions of fashions in dress, & c. We have a higher and nobler aim. The Ladies' Department will be dedicated to mothers and thrifty housewives, and those who aspire to the honor of becoming such--to those who are in fact, as well as in name, the helpmates of their husbands.<sup>11</sup>

The female readership appreciated the contents directed their way and, as a correspondent from South Carolina claimed, in August, 1826:

I cannot help telling you that I am very much pleased with your plan of appropriating a portion of the *American Farmer* to readings for the female portion of the farmer's family. With the articles generally under the Ladies' Department, I have been much gratified, and especially with the 'whispers to newly married people . . .'  
I know of nothing equal, much less superior on the subject.<sup>12</sup>

With similar testimonials from the feminine patrons and Skinner's belief in the important role of the female in agricultural pursuits, it is not surprising to find a statement in 1827 declaring that, in its ideal make-up, fifty percent of each issue, or four pages, would deal with practical agriculture while the other fifty percent would be divided between external improvements, rural and domestic economy, pieces for "housekeepers and female readers," natural history, and sports.<sup>13</sup>

Women generally received praise and distinction during the first third of the nineteenth century by performing domestic chores such as sewing, cooking, and raising children and, for the most part, the contents of the "Ladies' Department" adhered to similar subjects. The theme of family health and hygiene, however, tended to continually reappear in the column. Responsibility for the health and happiness of her husband and children as well as for her own health was continually thrust upon the female reader. Focus was laid upon both physical and mental health and topics such as recipes, hints for food preparation and preservation, choice and quantity of food, washing and cleaning instructions, proper amounts of

\*Jack W. Berryman and Joann Brislin, University of Washington.

sleep, exterminating unwanted pests, controlling one's temper, and the evils of alcohol and tobacco were common. The "Ladies' Department" also included such topics as the qualities and virtues of a good wife, instructions for the caring and raising of children, guides for newly married couples, proper clothing, and sexual practices, which occasionally related directly to the better health of one or more of the family members. Finally, subjects seldomly relating to personal health such as the care and culture of plants, frugality, education, music, manners, poems and short stories were also presented in the column.

The direct connection made between what one consumed and health was an important one and was the basis for much of the contents in the "Ladies' Department." From its inception, the *American Farmer* printed recipes and dealt with overindulgence, eating the wrong kinds of food, alcoholic beverages, improper storage and preservation of food, and bad water as the stimuli for hygienic degeneracy which would, in turn, provide a fertile environment for disease. Another major cause of physical decline and poor health was identified as a sedentary life style. Male agriculturists, on the whole, by way of their vigorous outdoor labors, were usually spared criticism for inactivity but Skinner often pointed out the necessity for women and children to obtain some form of exercise. Food, drink, and inactivity then, in unnatural quantities or content, were viewed as the major contributors to poor health. Accordingly, based upon the latest medical advice in Europe and America, bathing in certain types and temperatures of water, exposure to sunlight, fresh air, proper dress, a correct diet, and exercise were highly recommended as preventative measures or cures in the "Ladies' Department." The idea of a sound mind in a sound body was not as novel as one might have suspected at the time and it frequently served as a viable rationale for the increased sponsorship of exercise for men, women and children. Exercise in the form of sport, which was suggested because of its believed diversionary and mental health qualities as well as its obvious physical benefits, gradually became recommended for women and their children via the "Ladies' Department."<sup>14</sup>

The period 1825-1830 bordered on two important developments in the history of the United States--a plea for the reform in general of American ways of life and the rise in popularity of outdoor sports. Alterations in both subjects played a vital role in the availability of more health and exercise opportunities for all family members and it is suggested that Skinner's *American Farmer* was ahead of its time by actively publishing information sponsoring both of the above topics. Among attempts at the abolition of slavery, temperance reform, public education bills, concern for the insane, capital punishment debates, and desires to renovate penal institutions, were cries for increased women's rights--particularly in the form of educational opportunities and voting privileges.<sup>15</sup> Also, more than ever before, Americans were reading about and viewing for themselves horse races, boxing matches, pedestrian contests, and boat races. Others actively participated in hunting, fishing, bowling, quoits, fox hunts, skating, swimming, and horseback riding.

For the most part, however, largely as a result of her generally neglected position in the workings of

society outside of the home and the popularity of the belief that a lady of fashion was sleek, non-aggressive and delicate of mind and stature, the female was customarily ignored when it came to recommendation for active physical exercise, especially sporting activities thought better suited for the "manlier qualities" of her husband, father, or son.<sup>17</sup> Usually women were limited to such indoor "sports" and exercises as cards, teas and board games; they graced horse races and fox hunts with their displays of beauty and elegance, or they added an "element of respectability" to horse races while posing as spectators.

As suggested, the "Ladies' Department" of the *American Farmer*, while maintaining certain aspects of traditionalism, did manage to deviate from some typical canons of woman's role and actively spoke out in favor of more freedom and opportunities for females. As editor, Skinner kept current with foreign publications and often reprinted articles from other newspapers and magazines. He also wrote periodic scathing editorials and published communications from the readership which called for the reform of old ideas and customs. When it came to suggestions for good health and the role of active exercise for all members of the family, the *American Farmer* was unmatched before 1830. Although the "Sporting Olio" carried such information usually directed at males, it was the "Ladies' Department" that focused its attention upon opportunities for children and women. The woman as mother and wife was given the responsibility of looking after the health of her husband, her children, and herself.

#### Husband and Father

Through the "Sporting Olio" section, the *American Farmer* kept men informed of the latest news of horse racing, fox hunting, fishing and hunting and evidence suggesting the vital importance of exercise for good health was frequently provided. Also, inducements for the participation in outdoor sports were often included by Skinner through reprinted articles or by means of his own editorials.

Because of the contents of the "Sporting Olio," the "Ladies' Department" seldom contained information directed to the male. However, women were encouraged to understand their husbands' sporting pursuits and were asked to provide a home environment conducive to activities of the field. As wife, the female sometimes received clear instructions through the columns of the "Ladies' Department." In one of a series of articles devoted to "A Whisper to a Newly Married Pair," the new wife was asked:

Is he fond of fishing, fowling, & c.? When those amusements do not interfere with business or matters of consequence, what harm can result from them? Strive then to enter into his feelings with regard to the pleasure which they seem to afford him, and endeavour to feel interested in his harmless accounts and chat respecting them. Let his favorite dog be your favorite also; . . .<sup>18</sup>

Besides understanding and cooperation, women were expected to see the importance that such exercise outings had for the overall physical health and mental well-being of the male. In addition, everyday care of the household, including responsibility

for the preparation of food, cleaning, and supervising the children, were viewed as assistance activities for a better working home unit. In turn, the husband and father received more free time away from his work and home whereby he could indulge in activities of his choosing.

### Children

Unlike the husband and father, who received special treatment in most sections of the *American Farmer*, matters concerning children rarely received attention outside of the "Ladies' Department." It was the mother, not the father, who was given major responsibility for all phases of the child's period of growth as was indicated in an article on "Female Government" in 1827 which stressed the unfavorable effects of the lack of maternal guidance.<sup>19</sup>

Advice and instructions relating to generally acceptable child health practices and the need for free outdoor exercise along with hints for instilling discipline and morality, proper clothing, food, and bedding were regular topics of concern in the "Ladies' Department." Mothers were provided not only with instructions as to the amount and type of activity which the young child should be allowed to enjoy<sup>20</sup> but also with advice as to the values of active pursuits such as games.<sup>21</sup>

Freedom of movement, exposure to the elements, and the general value of a hardy life were often stressed to mothers of young children. In "A Hint to Mother" an M.D. warned against the restrictions and confinement placed upon the child by clothing since, in his

words, "All young animals naturally delight to be in the open air, and in perpetual motion."<sup>22</sup> Two months later, another article advised that children should be brought up with as little dependency as possible upon "bodily indulgence and luxuries" and to repress early any signs of "self-indulgence, daintiness and waste."<sup>23</sup>

Skinner himself stated his feelings on the need for sports participation and exercises for children by publishing a personal account of his own family.

If we had twenty sons, we should wish them all to excel, first in honourable and virtuous principles; then in useful knowledge and polite accomplishments, in the art of swimming, skating, riding, shooting, and such like sources of innocent amusement, as have a tendency to strengthen the body and recreate the mind; all this we pray for and inculcate upon them a detestation of the bottle, the bar room, the dice-box and the cockpit, to some or all which young men are too apt to betake themselves, if not familiar with, and fond of the gentlemanly exercises and accomplishments that carry them by the light of heaven into open air.<sup>24</sup>

Another writer stressed the importance of instructing youth in sport skills at an early age, especially ice skating and swimming.<sup>25</sup> One article was clear in emphasizing that "bodily exercises of the two sexes ought, in fact, to be the same"<sup>26</sup> and another stated that:

The beneficial effects of regular exercise in young girls, are the same as those we enumerated in the last essay, when treating of exercise as essential to health in boyhood: but in young girls it is more essential . . . .<sup>27</sup>

Lastly, the author of an article reprinted from the *Journal of Health* confessed that until age ten he enjoyed "unbounded liberty" and pursued all manner of physical activity until he had "surpassed all [his] competitors in running, wrestling, swimming, and in every species of juvenile and daring exploit."<sup>28</sup>

Such confessions, warnings, examples, and advice published in the columns of the "Ladies' Department" served as viable guidelines for mothers in their quest to rear their children in a healthy and acceptable manner. As a result, by 1830, the readers of the *American Farmer* had been informed of many of the latest developments in child care and, as noted, material dealing with sound health practices and exercise played no small role.

### Wife and Mother

Early writers and women's rights advocates who made a plea for exercise and health of females like Benjamin Rush, Charles B. Brown, Hannah C. Mather, Frances Wright, Emma Willard, and Catherine Beecher and selected articles in magazines such as the *American Journal of Education*, the *Boston Medical Intelligencer*, and the *Journal of Health*, either preceded or were contemporary to the *American Farmer*.<sup>29</sup> Yet, mainly because of Skinner's own beliefs and the eclectic nature of the *American*



Winchester, Virginia. Farm wife carrying water, November 1919 (Courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

*Farmer's* content, the patrons of the "Ladies' Department" received some of the most current and unique information available anywhere. Particularly evident was an emphasis upon the personal hygiene of the female who was of such value to the farm family unit in her role as wife and mother.

Articles dealt with such topics as the proper amount of sleep, the right age to have sex, and things to do in order to have a well-regulated and tranquil mind. Another common topic was the harmful practice of wearing tight fitting clothing and "stays" to improve the support and appearance of the female body. As one author remarked:

It is a curious but an undoubted fact, that the majority of deformed persons are of the female sex, a circumstance which probably is owing to the restraints in dress imposed on this part of the species from the mistaken notion that the delicacy of their bodies requires artificial support.<sup>30</sup>

Just about a year later the female agriculturists were warned again:

Strong stays, which do the duty of the muscles placed by nature around the spine, causes the muscles to dwindle from inaction, so that afterwards, when the support of the stay fails to become unequal, the back bends or twists . . . . A healthy young woman from the country, whose spine lies deep between the firm cushions of the muscles which support it, if braced up in tight stays, according to town fashions, will frequently exhibit, at the end of a short time, such a wasting of the flesh, that the points of bone in the spine may be counted in the eye.<sup>31</sup>

Still other articles like "Tight Dressing"<sup>32</sup> and "The Complaint of the Lungs"<sup>33</sup> cautioned women that the binding of their ribs and waists would lead to "palpitation of the heart" and the practice failed to "let the blood circulate and made breathing harder."

Exercises in the form of games and sports were readily recommended for females in the columns of the "Ladies' Department." During October, 1827, in an article aptly titled "Of the Exercises Most Conducive to Health in Girls and Young Women," the author believed:

Nearly the same exercises, with the exception of wrestling, cricket, quoits, and those sports properly termed athletic, which are proper for boys, may be recommended for young girls. Trundling a hoop, battledore, trap-ball, and every game which can exercise both the legs and the arms, and at the same time the muscles of the body, should be encouraged . . . .<sup>34</sup>

In another article discussing the quantity of exercise for females, the author remarked that "no absurdity is greater than that which associates female beauty with great delicacy of body and debility of constitution . . . ." The piece continued by claiming that:

The safest rule for exercising young girls, is to leave the quantity of exercise to their own feelings of fatigue . . . . To over-

come this evil [girls not taking "active exercise"], gymnastic, and what are termed Calisthenic exercises have been introduced . . . [in schools] . . . The efforts must be gradually brought on, and not too suddenly discontinued, nor should they ever be exerted beyond the power of the girl. They should also be daily and regularly performed . . . .<sup>35</sup>

Other articles attacked the general lack of opportunity usually attributable to females and suggested that "the restraints imposed upon young women in society ought, under no circumstances, to prevent such exercises from being daily taken as will bring every muscle of the body into action."<sup>36</sup>

Horseback riding and dancing were the two most widely suggested physical activities for women and it is



*Scottsboro, Alabama. Mrs. Mary McLean at skyline farms, a U.S. Resettlement Administrative project, 1937 (Courtesy, Library of Congress).*

clear from the following statement why riding a horse received such high praise:

Riding is a most salutary exercise for young women, from its engaging many of the muscles of the body, as well as those of the arms and thighs; and from the succession of changes of respirable air which the rapid progression of the body through an extensive space, in a short time, causes to be conveyed to the lungs.<sup>37</sup>

Writers of articles also warned mothers not to treat girls much differently from boys and one asked:

But how often has an over anxiety for delicacy of complexion in a daughter, or the apprehensions that her limbs may become coarse and ungraceful, and her habits vulgar been the means of debarring her from the enjoyment of either air or exercise to an extent sufficient to ensure the health and activity of the system.<sup>38</sup>

Strenuous exercise was further recommended for girls because of its powers for

. . . strengthening the constitution, preserving the limbs in the free exercise of all their motions, and guarantying [sic] the system from the deleterious influence of those agents by which it is to be constantly surrounded . . . .<sup>39</sup>

Finally, short stories like the following account from "Mr. Abernathy," had conclusions which reinforced the relationship between good health and exercise:

A lady very much afflicted with nervous complaints, went to consult the celebrated surgeon Abernathy. The rough and caustic manner in which he catechised her, so discomposed the fair one's weak spirits, that she was thrown into a fit of hysterics. In parting, she put the usual fee into his hands, in the form of a sovereign and a shilling. Mr. Abernathy pocketed the sovereign with one hand, and with the other

presented the shilling to her, saying, gravely - "Here, Madam, take this shilling, go to the next toy-shop, buy a skipping rope, and use it every day - it will do you more good than all my prescriptions."<sup>40</sup>

During the eleven years that Skinner maintained editorship of the *American Farmer* and especially during the final five years when the "Ladies' Department" was a regular section, the magazine did not have an equal in the United States. Skinner's publication served as a forerunner for the movement which actively encouraged more opportunities for women and was especially ahead of its time by recommending a variety of active sports for female readership. The idea of woman as "helpmate" rather than as subordinate was also a unique feature of the feelings toward the female's role in the agricultural family and was continually expressed in the pages of the *American Farmer*. Additionally, other agricultural magazines after 1830 adopted the format of Skinner's *American Farmer* and installed "Ladies' Departments" which tended to focus on many of the same issues.<sup>41</sup>

The establishment of a special "Ladies' Department" was a noble and unprecedented event in the early years of the feminist movement. But, specifically, the section served as a significant locus for the advocacy of family health and exercise. By focusing its attention on a captive audience of female readers, the "Ladies' Department" was able to implant into the minds of mothers and wives an array of hints, suggestions, and warnings concerning the importance of good health for their families and the necessity for active exercise as a cure and preventative measure for the degeneracy of both mind and body.



Amy Fry, 11, of Laytonsville, Maryland, pouring water into containers for chickens on farm of father, Edwin D. Fry, Agricultural Adjustment Agency Committeeman. July, 1941 (Photo by Boyer; courtesy of Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

# NOTES

1. For more information on the agricultural magazine see: Albert L. Demaree, *The American Agricultural Press, 1819-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941); William E. Ogilvie, *Pioneer Agricultural Journalists* (New York: Beekman Inc., 1974; Stephen Stuntz, comp. and Emma B. Hawks, ed., *List of the Agricultural Periodicals of the United States and Canada Published During the Century July 1810 to July 1910* (Washington, D.C.: Gov't. Printing Office, 1941); Gilbert M. Tucker, *American Agricultural Periodicals: An Historical Sketch* (Albany, N.Y.: The author, 1909); Rodney H. True, "Beginnings of Agricultural Literature in America," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, 14 (May, 1920), 186-194, and G. E. Fussell, "Early Farming Journals," *Economic History Review*, 3 (April, 1932), 417-422. Also see Claribel R. Barnett, "The Agricultural Museum: An Early American Agricultural Periodical," *Agricultural History*, 2 (April, 1928), 99-102.
2. General information concerning the rise of the specialized magazine industry in America can be found in: William G. Bleyer, *Main Currents in the History of Journalism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927); William B. Cairns, *On the Development of American Literature from 1815 to 1833 with Especial Reference to Periodicals* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1898); Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1873); Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850*, 5 volumes (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1930); Lyon N. Richardson, *A History of Early American Magazines, 1741-1789* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1931), and John W. Tebbel, *The American Magazine: A Compact History* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969).
3. Both the *American Farmer* and its editor, John S. Skinner, have been the focus of past research. For example consult: Harold T. Pinkett, "The *American Farmer*, A Pioneer Agricultural Journal, 1819-1834," *Agricultural History*, 24 (July, 1950), 146-151; Harold A. Bierck, Jr., "Spoils, Soils and Skinner," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 49 (March, 1954), 21-40 and (June, 1954), 143-155; Lucretia Ramsey Bishko, "John S. Skinner Visits the Virginia Springs, 1847," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 80 (April, 1972), 158-192; Lucretia Ramsey Bishko, "The Agricultural Society of Albemarle and John S. Skinner: An Enduring Friendship," *Magazine of Albemarle County History*, 31 (1973), 76-113, and Mrs. Weems Ridout, "Col. John Stewart (sic) Skinner," *Patriotic Marylander*, 1 (June, 1915), 49-54.
4. *American Farmer*, 1:1 (April 2, 1819), p. 6 (hereafter referred to as *AF*). All issues of the *American Farmer* from April 2, 1819, through August 27, 1830, when Skinner sold the magazine, were examined for the study. Although the focus is upon the years of the "Ladies' Department," it was of vital importance to analyze the trends leading up to its inclusion as a special section of the magazine.
5. The 1820's were the great years of the editor, or the period of "personal journalism," when the editor, owner, and publisher were usually the same person and his influence and ability to shape public opinion was unquestioned. Consequently, many of Skinner's own observations, biases, and ideas received considerable attention.
6. Skinner was an avid sportsman who made many valuable contributions to the sports of horse racing, fox hunting, hunting, and fishing. A detailed account of Skinner's sporting contributions may be found in Jack W. Berryman, "John Stuart Skinner and the *American Farmer*, 1819-1829: An Early Proponent of Rural Sports," *Associates NAL Today*, 1:3 (October, 1976), 11-32.
7. Information for women was usually scattered throughout the early volumes but gradually more information began to appear in the "Miscellaneous" section. Recipes also were quite popular and were eventually put into a special "Recipe" section in volume 5 (1823-1824).
8. *AF*, 6:44 (January 21, 1825), pp. 349-350. The "Sporting Olio" section contained a considerable wealth of material dealing with exercise and health but it was usually directed to a male audience. More information pertaining to Skinner's role in American sporting journalism can be found in John R. Betts, "Sporting Journalism in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly*, 5 (1953), 39-56 and Ernest R. Gee, *Early American Sporting Books, 1834-1844* (New York: Derrydale Press, 1929).
9. *AF*, 7:24 (September 2, 1825), pp. 189-190. With only a few exceptions, the new section appeared in every weekly issue and usually spanned from a one column minimum to over a page in content.
10. *AF*, 7:50 (March 3, 1826), p. 397.
11. *AF*, 8:13 (June 16, 1826), p. 99.
12. *AF*, 8:23 (August 25, 1826), pp. 181-182.

13. *AF*, 8:48 (February 16, 1827), p. 384.
14. On the issue of exercise and health in ante-bellum America see John R. Betts, "Mind and Body in Early American Thought," *Journal of American History*, 54 (March, 1968), 787-805; John R. Betts, "American Medical Thought on Exercise as the Road to Health, 1820-1860," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 45 (March-April, 1971), 138-142; Richard H. Shryock, "Sylvester Graham and the Popular Health Movement, 1830-1870," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 18 (September, 1931), 172-183, and Richard H. Shryock, "The Origins and Significance of the Public Health Movement in the United States," *Annals of Medical History*, 1 (November, 1929), 645-665.
15. Skinner actively pushed for more educational opportunities for women and published at least one article dealing with the right of women to vote: "Rights of Women," *AF*, 11:34 (November 6, 1829), pp. 269-270.
16. Further information concerning the rise of popularity for sport and sporting contests can be found in John A. Krout, "Some Reflections on the Rise of American Sports," *Proceedings, Association of History Teachers of the Middle States and Maryland*, 26 (May, 1928), 84-93; Frederic L. Paxson, "The Rise of Sport," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 4 (September, 1917), 143-168; Foster Rhea Dulles, *A History of Recreation: America Learns to Play* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), and Jennie Holliman, *American Sports (1785-1835)* (Durham, N.C.: Seeman Press, 1931).
17. A vast number of Americans accepted the idea of woman's inferiority to man and therefore believed it was legitimate to limit female opportunities and activities.
18. *AF*, 8:2 (March 31, 1826), pp. 13-15.
19. *AF*, 8:43 (January 12, 1827), p. 342.
20. *AF*, 8:7 (May 5, 1826), p. 54.
21. *AF*, 8:28 (September 29, 1826), p. 221. The author identified "the theatre, cards and every species of infantile gaming" as objectionable amusements. "Infantile gaming" was "intended to include only those games in which children play for money, or which, at least, may lead to their doing so at some future period."
22. *AF*, 9:1 (March 23, 1827), p. 5.
23. *AF*, 9:7 (May 4, 1827), p. 55.
24. *AF*, 7:46 (February 3, 1826), p. 368.
25. *AF*, 6:44 (January 21, 1825), p. 349.
26. *AF*, 11:41 (December 25, 1829), p. 325-326.
27. *AF*, 9:34 (November 9, 1827), pp. 270-271. It should be noted that most of the published material on health and exercise for children was directed at both sexes. For example see William P. Dewees, *Treatise on the Physical and Medical Treatment of Children* (1826).
28. *AF*, 12:15 (June 25, 1830), p. 118.
29. For a detailed account of the early American proponents for the exercise of females see Roberta J. Park, "Our Bodies Ourselves': The Rise of Concern for the Physical Education of American Women, 1776-1865," paper presented at the meetings of the North American Society for Sport History, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, May, 1977.
30. *AF*, 9:10 (May 25, 1827), p. 78.
31. *AF*, 10:5 (April 18, 1828), p. 38.
32. *AF*, 10:14 (June 20, 1828), p. 110.
33. *AF*, 11:37 (November 27, 1829), p. 294.
34. *AF*, 9:32 (October 26, 1827), p. 254.
35. *AF*, 9:34 (November 9, 1827), pp. 270-271.
36. *AF*, 11:27 (September 18, 1829), p. 214.
37. *AF*, 9:32 (October 26, 1827), p. 254. See also "Riding on Horseback," *AF*, 10:12 (June 6, 1828), p. 95 and "Ladies on Horseback," *AF*, 12:12 (June 4, 1830), pp. 94-95. For dancing see *AF*, 9:32 (October 26, 1827), p. 254.

38. *AF*, 11:41 (December 25, 1829), p. 326.
39. *AF*, 11:41 (December 25, 1829), pp. 325-326.
40. *AF*, 9:9 (May 18, 1827), p. 70.
41. For example, see Frances W. Kaye, "The Ladies' Department of the *Ohio Cultivator*, 1845-1855: A Feminist Forum," *Agricultural History*, 50 (April, 1976), 414-423.



*Milking--yesterday (Photo by Rural Electrification Administration; courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).*

## RURAL WOMEN

by

Cornelia Butler Flora\*

The book of Proverbs tells us that the qualities of a virtuous woman include these things:

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household . . . . She considereth a field, and buyeth it; and with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hand holdeth the distaff . . . . She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. (Proverbs 31: 13-19, 27)

That virtuous woman, active in production, describes very well the traditional rural woman that was important in the United States as it grew from thirteen tiny colonies and moved westward to found a large and modern nation. How has the modern rural woman changed from this epitome of virtue, and in what ways does she still mirror many of these exemplary qualities? This paper will now examine the historical and literary roots that give us insights into rural women, reveal the kind of work they do and how this has shifted over time, take a look at marriage, childbearing, and child-rearing of rural women, and finally analyze rural women's life styles and what implications there are for the future of rural America.

### Historical Roots

The rural woman, the woman that accompanied the frontiersman that broke new land that stretched the boundaries of America, was a helpmate, as opposed to her ideal urban counterpart, the refined lady.<sup>1</sup> The refined lady did not get her hands dirty, wore large and full skirts that kept her from doing anything useful, and was an asset to her husband because she reflected his social status. The helpmate, on the other hand, had brown and chapped hands, wore plain skirts often hiked up a bit to let her work more easily, and was an asset to her husband because he could not survive without her labor, from preparing the food, to growing it, to helping in the fields, from making the clothes to washing them. These kinds of domestic reproduction were made even more necessary by the isolated nature of rural existence, where there was no laundry, no restaurant, and no other way to

carry out daily life but through the helpmate partnership. There were more men than women on the rural frontier, and the wife as helpmate was indeed a valued species.

Statistics do not reveal to us a great deal about the rural women of the 18th and 19th century. However, songs, diaries, and novels supplement our historical view of rural women. Many of them stress the rigors of the early rural life. We see undaunted women in works such as *Sod and Stubble*<sup>2</sup> who go out into the wilderness aware of its compelling hostility, but who overcome it and survive. On the other hand, in such works as *Giants in the Earth*<sup>3</sup> by Rolvaag, there is the same hostile environment to be conquered, the same aggressive men going after it, but a woman who is too sensitive, too frail, too fearful to survive in the rural frontier climate. Rural women who survived were strong as personified in the literature by Scarlet O'Hara<sup>4</sup> in the south, by hillbilly women in the north and central states and by the pioneer women of tale and song. Stoeltje differentiates sharply between that helpmate, the rural woman, and her refined urban counterpart. They differ greatly in the strength and initiative exhibited in coping with the hardships and demands of the life they led:

Her strength was physical and emotional, she was able to carry out routine everyday chores of milking, cooking, sewing, gardening, caring for chickens, childbearing and childrearing, caring for the sick and generally acting as a partner with her husband. Women were equally adapted to handling emergency situations, Indian attacks, droughts, deaths.<sup>5</sup>

This woman's strength was all-giving. She was a productive partner to her husband. She seldom cried out for equality, because she took equal responsibility for their survival.

This strong, hard working woman always put others first, and her type still exists today to some degree in rural areas. When decisions must be made between improving the house or the barn, the money is put into the barn; when it is a decision of buying a new bull or a new dress, the bull wins.

Early rural sociologists were concerned because of the hard life rural women had, thinking that if only they would acquire some of the modern conveniences that their urban sisters had, such as washing machines, running water and vacuum cleaners, their lives would be much easier. Given a bit of leisure, they would be able to spend their time in the refined spiritual concerns that were most "natural" to women.<sup>6</sup> They decried the fact that rural women could not devote themselves to piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity representative of the cult of true womanhood.<sup>7</sup> Domesticity meant the symbols of gracious living, including the parlor, lemonade, and sweat-free dresses on shaded porches.

As rural women moved into the small towns they began to take on that image. Some, as represented in the literary works of William Allen White,<sup>8</sup> found it delightful; others, as shown in Sinclair Lewis's *Mainstreet*,<sup>9</sup> found this role of refined lady too con-

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fining, too oppressive, too far away from the kinds of production that mattered to the ongoing society around them.

#### Production

Rural women still work and work hard, as evident sometimes in the old way as co-partner on the farm without pay. More and more of these rural women, however, are entering the labor force as wage laborers. Women who work for pay are still a minority among female farm residents. Where rural women do work, either farm or nonfarm, their wages tend to make up a larger proportion of the total family income than do the wages of urban women, because often it is the work of the wife that keeps the farm going. With the current low farm prices, the farmer who is a "go-getter," meaning he has to go to town to get her, his wife, from work, has an added asset to aid in survival of the family farm. However, only one in three farm women work for wages.<sup>10</sup>

Husbands of these poor rural women also seek work off the farm, and their farms tend to be smaller and on more marginal land. The lower the farm income of the husband, the more likely the wife's participation in the labor force.<sup>11</sup>

When women all across the United States entered the labor market in the '50's and '60's, it was because of a drastic change in the structure of production. There was a large emphasis on clerical jobs, and women were seen as more fitted for this kind of work. This revolution in production, this growth of the tertiary sector, is reflected in the employment of rural women as well. The most common occupation of all rural women is clerical. Professional employment is important for college educated rural women. By and large these professions are those which have traditionally been seen as female, including teaching, social work, and nursing. Women who have the skills to do these jobs are considered by their neighbors to be only slightly deviate for performing them, as long as they



*Farm women see themselves as productive members of a farming team. Here shown is Mrs. Bernard Renyer milking cows on the family farm near Sabetha, Kansas (Photo by Jim Richardson, Topeka Capital-Journal, courtesy of the author).*

For the poorer women who were once employed in agriculture, particularly in the south, mechanization and increasing size of farms has meant that they are now turning to urban types of occupations. These women, particularly black women in rural areas, tend to be employed in the very low paid service occupations, although increasingly, as industry moves from the urbanized northeast into the south and midwest, women enter low paying industrial jobs as well.

are home to fulfill their family functions as well.

The changing structure of agriculture has also meant a change in the unpaid work that rural women do. As farms get more and more technologically developed, women are less and less likely to participate in the actual farming procedure. Because of past strict sexual segregation in school curriculum, they have not had the basics of vocational agriculture or mechanics

that would allow them to work easily with complicated machinery, and their husbands are loath to risk expensive equipment in untrained and nervous hands. A variety of investigators have found a curvilinear relationship between participation of the wife in the farm decisions and the level of development in the farm. In the very poorest farms the wife has little input because she is very busy in off the farm labor trying to supplement farm income. In the medium level farms the wife is very active, building up the equity and contributing to the labor. Large scale operations, more complex agricultural technology, and aspiration to a suburban life style decreases the input that wives on large farms have in farm decision making.

According to Banks, DeAre and Speaker,<sup>12</sup> farm women were more likely to be employed in nonagricultural pursuits than farm men. Twenty-eight percent of farm women are employed in agriculture compared to 60.1 percent of the farm men, according to the official figures of the U.S. Bureau of the Census as of April, 1975. However, it can be assumed that this might underestimate women in agriculture because of the tendency of women to view themselves as farm wives rather than as farmers. When women are employed in agriculture they are much more likely to be unpaid family workers. Seventy-six percent of them were so classified in 1970, compared to only 61 percent of them in 1975. The proportion of males that were employed in agriculture as unpaid family workers remained a constant 14 percent over that five year period.

There has been a growing separation of place of work and place of residence for farmers in the United States which means a growing separation of the work of women from the work of men. In 1975, only 58 percent of those employed in agriculture were actually farm residents and 42 percent of all agricultural workers did not live on the farms where they worked. Thus, the traditional partnership and helpmate role of farm men and farm women is declining by the necessity of geography.

#### Marriage and Reproduction

In the United States as a whole, women have outnumbered men ever since the census of 1940. In rural areas the sex ratio is much more equal, and in farming areas there are more men than women. One of the reasons for this is the higher migration of rural women from the countryside to the city. Whereas in frontier times, it was the males that first migrated to the rural areas, now, once an area is settled, it is the females who first leave, seeking the chances of a more varied and perhaps easier life in the city. Further, survival in rural areas is difficult without men, particularly for young women. Sources of employment are predominantly male and land--the major resource--tends to be held by men. There is, in rural nonfarm areas, particularly the small towns, a growing number of women without men who are widows. In rural, as in urban areas, the life expectancy of women is greater than that of men. But on the farm, few widows feel they can manage alone.

The rural farm woman will move to town upon widowhood and seek to maintain herself there. These women are

often not covered by social security of their own, although they have been a partner on the farm all their lives and worked hard at it. Their level of living is minimal. The average age of farm women dropped between 1970 and 1975 after decades of increasing. This is due to a larger proportion of farmers in the younger age groups from 20 to 24 which, in turn, reflects the peak years of the baby boom that reached its zenith in 1956.

For most women to remain in a rural area is to be married. Indeed, one of the strongest differences that exist between rural and urban areas is the earlier age at marriage for rural women. Over 93 percent of farm families are husband-wife families. Only four percent of white farm families have a female head, compared to nearly 11 percent of nonfarm white families.

Not only do rural women marry earlier, but also they have their children earlier than urban women. While during the '50's and the early '60's, there was a convergence in the birthrates between rural and urban areas<sup>13</sup> and while even now we see completed family size is about equal in urban areas and rural areas, there is a very large difference in the timing of the births. Rural women who are between 20 and 24 years of age have substantially more children than urban women in the same age bracket. They tend to have their children at young ages and to have them close together. Continuation of the traditional pattern of early motherhood coupled with the new secular trend to smaller families means that there is a whole generation of rural women emerging who have completed their childbearing and childrearing functions and who are ready for new roles to play.

The continued differences between rural and urban fertility should not allow us to forget that rural women are differing greatly from their mothers in the total number of children born. The decrease in fertility in the rural areas, both rural farm and rural nonfarm, is much greater than the decrease in fertility in the urban areas.

Rural women take child raising and childhood socialization very seriously and tend to leave the labor market when they have children. One of the reasons is that the jobs that they have are not that rewarding, either monetarily or socially. Another reason for leaving the labor force is that they have their children at an early age before they are firmly enough established in the field to stay with their jobs. A third reason is a very strong belief which exists in rural areas that only the mother can raise a child. Rural women with young children who continue to work face levels of social disapproval that urban women in similar occupations would find hard to imagine. Emphasis on childhood socialization, coupled with a decline in the actual work required for home and farm maintenance very often means that women become professional mothers. The dedicated rural mother's most important tool is her automobile in which she drives her children from ballet lessons to Little League to 4-H, availing to her children the best of both urban and rural worlds.

#### Lifestyles

In the past, socialization of children did not cease



*Winchester, Virginia. Ironing in a country kitchen, November 6, 1919 (Courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).*



*Women at work in celery beds, Buffalo, New York, 1905 (Courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).*



*Mrs. Thomas Jenkins of Libertyville, Illinois, takes time off from her job as a homemaker to separate cream for market. She is one of the thousands of farm women pinch hitting for the hired hands then hard for farmers to find. November, 1941 (Photo by Les White; courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).*



*Texas. Weighing sacks of cotton. August, 1941 (Photo by Harmon, Agricultural Adjustment Administration; courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).*

for rural women simply because their children married early because kinship ties were much more closely binding in rural areas. There are usually grandchildren upon whom to lavish maternal affection. This is particularly true of black rural women in the south who are very often raising grandchildren, the children of their own urban children who are making a living in the north but sending their children to the south for the kind of care only grandma can give. Farm families are also more likely to include elderly persons than are nonfarm families, extending the caretaking function for rural women.

But as the level of education of rural youth rises, geographical mobility of young people also increases, and further isolates the older rural woman from her maternal role.

Participation in community organizations has in the past kept rural women actively cultivating the same kind of virtues that motherhood prepared them for, in terms of bringing enlightenment and beauty to the world around them. The strength of church ties and women's organizations in town have in the past been very strong. In general, studies show that rural women have higher rates of participation in organizations than rural men and, furthermore, have high rates of leadership in these organizations, although their leadership is higher in the all female groups. Indeed a truism in many rural towns is that it is the women who get things done, although the men get the credit. The talented rural woman will be the one who comes up with a plan and then makes the men in power think they thought of the idea themselves.

Given the traditional structures that surround her, her earlier and higher fertility, her less likelihood to participate in the labor force because of fewer opportunities in the rural areas, and her closer integration with her husband's occupation, it is not surprising that rural woman is more traditional than urban woman on a number of measures. For example, in analyzing the Roper Opinion Poll for 1974, the author found rural women much less likely to approve of women running for office, of women working outside the home, and even of women earning the same pay as men for the same job. In a rural area there are more men than women and a woman can count on a man to support her for at least a major portion of her life, facilitating performance of the female role. The social and economic circumstances surrounding rural women would tend to make them more conservative.

However, once women participate in the labor force, their viewpoint seems to change. When only working women are compared, there is no difference between rural and urban women.<sup>14</sup> Participation in the labor force is related to less traditional attitudes for two reasons. It creates a change in the women because of their day to day interaction in a less protected environment, and it also is selective of the less traditional rural women.

In some of the work that is currently being done by the author on rural to urban migration, interesting hints have been found indicating that more traditional urban women choose rural areas to raise children. Often traditional families will choose a rural nonfarm area to raise their families.



*The availability of female relatives in close-knit communities helps to free rural women from traditionally female tasks, including child care (Photo by Jim Richardson, Topeka Capital-Journal; courtesy of the author).*

The old differences that were once found between rural and urban areas, differences between the helpmate and the refined lady, in many ways are declining. The wife of a large farmer is as likely to fly into Denver or Houston to do her shopping as the wife of an urban lawyer. Indeed, she sees herself as a global person not as a farm wife. On the other hand, for the less well-to-do rural resident, there are real constraints that make traditional rural views more acceptable and changing roles, particularly those related to the family, more threatening and less acceptable. For the rural woman there is a constant justification and affirmation of her status in the traditional female role of helpmate and mother. For the urban woman, in her more diverse environment in which everyone she meets is not aware of all the other roles she plays, worth must come from a variety of sources and is much more likely to be determined by self rather than by family. Thus when urban woman rebels against the role

of refined lady, it makes no sense to the rural woman. She has never been confined by that role nor has her worth been denied because of it. Instead, the rural woman sees herself as already liberated, the hard working helpmate, the much prized woman of frontier and biblical virtues who epitomizes for many of us what is still today the rural woman.

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## LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS OF NONMETROPOLITAN WOMEN

by

Jeanne M. O'Leary\*

Today, as never before, women are entering the world of work outside the home, replacing males in the labor force, and assuming roles and occupations formerly considered to be in the domain of males alone. As the labor force participation of females has risen, the rate for males has declined. Since 1940, the number of females in the labor force nearly tripled, increasing from 14.2 million to 38.5 million. Similarly, the proportion of the total female population, age 16 and over, in the labor force rose from 27.9 percent to 47.3 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Though generating substantial literature concerning the absolute increase in female labor force participation, and the components of its change both by age and by marital status, little attention has focused on differences in patterns of labor force behavior between metro and nonmetro women. Those patterns and factors which affect labor force participation may vary by size and location and subsequent employment opportunities.

General statements which adequately depict conditions in more urban locales may be inaccurate for rural areas. One recent article on women in the work force stated, "Over the past quarter of a century, women's labor force participation has continued to increase steadily, despite several short term cyclical pauses. The most recent recession (1973-1975) was atypical, however, in that instead of halting all growth as in previous recessions, the number and proportion of women in the labor force continued to rise dramatically, outpacing the substantial gains in the female population."<sup>2</sup> While this description applies to metro areas, women's labor force participation in nonmetro areas was more volatile, fluctuating adversely with the depressed economic conditions of the 1973-1975 recession.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, while increasing over time, the rate of labor force participation of nonmetro area women, representing 30 percent of the total female labor force, has been consistently lower than that of their more urban counterparts. Part of this difference may be attributed to limited job opportunities and relatively more traditional mores in nonmetro areas. From 1960 to 1970, the rate of female labor force participation increased from 36.2 percent to 40.8 percent in metro areas and from 30.3 percent to 36.0 percent in nonmetro areas.<sup>4</sup> More recent data indicate that by 1976, female labor force participation reached 48.1 percent in metropolitan areas and 44.6 percent in nonmetro areas.<sup>5</sup> These figures indicate that the gap in area labor force participation rates is closing over time.

Another misconception in studying the labor force participation of rural women is equating rural with farm. One recent work evaluated current research which purported to analyze the status of rural women:

In this review, for example, although all twenty-three studies involved topics concerning women in rural areas, seven directly focused on farm wives and six on farm women, making a total of thirteen who looked at the farm population (4 percent of the population). Of the eight researchers who studied rural or "rurban" areas and women in general, all but one researcher focused on these women in terms of their position as wives, mothers and members of families. A total of eight studies were done principally on women as wives, and that is how they are termed in the studies. Only two studies focused on girls. Very few studies focused on women as persons, with the roles of wife and mother as part of the total makeup of the individuals involved. Women are not very visible in the literature, and when they appear, they are most frequently examined in light of their roles as wives and mothers.<sup>6</sup>

While it is interesting to examine "the changing consciousness of women and men about the role of women on farms,"<sup>7</sup> and important to assign greater value to women's contribution to the farm, agriculture provides employment for less than three percent of the nonmetro female labor force.<sup>8</sup> Focusing study on this small



Roadside market operated by a farm woman in Hampshire County, Massachusetts. September, 1940 (Photo by Hunton; courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

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segment of the labor force neglects the other 97 percent of the nonmetro female labor force whose labor force participation patterns may vary both from those of metro and farm females. The terms rural and nonmetropolitan are not synonymous with farm but, rather, separate entities, and must be evaluated as such.

A multitude of factors affecting females' decisions to enter the labor force can be cited and appraised, but center on three factors: (1) economic considerations; (2) changing attitudes toward marriage and childbearing and (3) increased employment opportunities in nonmetro areas due to industrialization. Satisfaction derived from work outside the home is another contributing factor; however, the subjective nature of job satisfaction, varying with each individual, makes assessment difficult.

With escalating prices, increasing wages, and rising levels of education, entrance to the labor force becomes increasingly attractive. The price of remaining at home becomes a foregone wage and, as that wage rises, inducements develop to seek employment and find alternate means of caring for children and dividing household chores. For females who have invested in higher education, it becomes imperative to regain those costs over a lifetime in the form of a career. For married women, employment provides the opportunity to supplant the family income. As total family income rises beyond a certain "level of comfort" many families can afford to reduce work hours and enjoy more leisure.<sup>9</sup> Thus incentives to enter the labor force are complicated by education, marital status, level of spouse's income and even earnings differentials between metro and nonmetro areas.



*Raspberry picking time on the Emmet Sietz farm in Newton, North Carolina, Catawba County. June 1935 (Courtesy Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).*



*Women at work in a citrus fruit packing plant (Photo by Agricultural Adjustment Administration; courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).*

Lowest rates of marriage since the Depression, higher age at marriage, lower levels of fertility, increases in divorce and the greater acceptance of women as workers have had pervasive effects on changing the rates and patterns of female labor force participation.<sup>10</sup> Prior to 1940, women's labor force participation was usually limited to single women or married women without children. By the 1950's, women aged 35 and over, whose childbearing years had ended, showed a dramatic increase in their labor force participation. From 1964 to 1974, young mothers of preschool age children increased their labor force participation with the rate climbing from 24 to 37 percent.<sup>11</sup>

In nonmetro areas, industrialization provided incentives for females to enter the labor force in the form of expanding employment opportunities. After World War II many rural residents migrated to urban centers in search of employment. Those remaining in rural areas created a pool of available, low-wage labor, attractive to other industries. By the early 1970's, the vast rural to urban migration was "halted and, on balance, even reversed."<sup>12</sup> According to Calvin Beale, "In the eyes of many Americans, the appeal of major urban areas has diminished and the attractiveness of rural and small town communities has increased, economically and otherwise . . . the decentralization trend in U.S. manufacturing has been a major factor in transforming the rural and small town economy, especially in the upland parts of the South. From 1962 to 1969, half of all U.S. nonmetro job growth was in manufacturing."<sup>13</sup> This influx of manufacturing industries to nonmetro areas further provided the impetus for ancillary, support industries to migrate to rural areas to provide service to both

manufacturing plants and their employees, thus multiplying employment opportunities.

From 1960 to 1970 the labor force in nonmetro areas grew by almost two million. Women were responsible for almost 94 percent of this growth. In metro areas, only 60 percent of the growth in the labor force can be attributed to females.<sup>14</sup> Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer suggests that:

It was not the increasing supply of women workers but the increasing demand for them that was the major causal influence since 1940 on women's rising labor force participation rates. Basic industrial and occupational growth trends, particularly in those occupations and industries that traditionally

both metro and nonmetro areas for women ages 25-34. Their labor force participation rates jumped 9 and 10.9 percentage points respectively. By 1970, women aged 18-24 had the highest labor force participation rates in metro areas, while women 35-44 had the highest rates in nonmetro areas. These metro females, 18-24, also experienced the highest levels of change in labor force participation, but nonmetro females, 35-44, had relatively little growth in labor force participation, from 1960 to 1970.<sup>16</sup>

The distribution of women in the labor force by marital status sheds more light on variations in the labor force participation rates by age. Nonmetro areas have a much higher concentration of married women with spouse present (63 percent of the labor force) than metro areas (53 percent). Metro areas have a higher

Table 1. Distribution of Labor Force and Labor Force Change by Age for Metro and Nonmetro Areas.

	Labor Force Participation 1960		Labor Force Participation 1970		Change 60-70		Distribution of Change (Percent)	Distribution of Labor Force 1970
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate		
Metro								
Total	16,842,222	36.2	23,399,028	40.8	6,556,806	4.6	100	100
14-17	531,951	14.4	858,415	15.1	326,464	.7	5.0	3.7
18-24	2,755,506	48.2	4,993,371	55.6	2,237,865	7.4	34.1	21.3
25-34	3,123,749	36.2	4,344,119	45.2	1,220,370	9.0	18.6	18.6
35-44	3,980,360	43.7	4,491,645	50.3	511,285	6.6	7.8	19.2
45-64	5,788,716	43.4	7,860,976	49.2	2,072,260	5.8	31.6	33.6
65 +	661,940	10.8	850,502	10.4	188,562	-1.4	2.9	3.6
Nonmetro								
Total	5,567,538	30.7	7,421,742	36.0	1,854,204	5.7	100	100
14-17	240,256	13.2	298,087	13.4	57,831	.2	3.1	4.0
18-24	838,598	37.8	1,415,550	47.0	576,952	9.2	31.1	19.0
25-34	993,084	32.9	1,343,146	43.8	350,062	10.9	18.9	18.1
35-44	1,285,226	39.9	1,473,370	50.1	188,144	10.2	10.1	19.9
45-64	1,953,496	36.9	2,570,813	43.9	617,317	7.0	33.3	34.6
65 +	256,878	9.2	320,776	9.2	63,898	0	3.4	4.3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1960 and 1970.

were major employers of women led to increased demand for female workers. The fact that single and young women constituted a stationary or declining fraction of the population during the period explained the expansion of demand to include married and older women, and this facilitated an increase in their participation. Once in the labor force they stayed in, both because of their own inclinations and because employers became aware of the productive contributions they were making.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1 illustrates changes in labor force participation by age. From 1960 to 1970, the greatest increase in female labor force participation rates occurred in

concentration of single women of all ages (27.6 percent for metro and 20 percent for nonmetro).<sup>17</sup> This greater concentration of married females with spouse present in nonmetro areas, and the higher fertility rate (2,235 births per 1,000 wives in nonmetro areas versus 2,073 per 1,000 in metro areas) may aid in explaining the lower participation rates for young nonmetro women. It is also plausible that employment opportunities in nonmetro areas do not provide as strong an inducement to enter the labor force as exist in metro areas.

These participation rates are illustrative in themselves; they fail, however, to tell us anything about the kinds and quality of jobs females seek, their success in obtaining employment and their attachment

to the labor force. In fact, these aggregates mask the incidence of concentration in lower skilled, lower paying, secondary jobs, female unemployment rates higher than those for males, and greater job loss and reduced hours during recessions.

Evidence of the influx of manufacturing jobs to non-metro areas is presented by the distinctions in the distribution of employment change by occupation for metro and nonmetro areas (Table 2). Over 80 percent of this female nonmetro growth occurred in three occupational groups: clerical, service and operatives. While less than 18 percent of nonmetro growth occurred in professional and managerial occupations, almost 24 percent of metro growth was in these areas. For both areas the highest percentages of female growth occurred in clerical occupations. Additionally, nonmetro areas showed large increases in occupations as operatives and experienced greater proportional gains in services than did metro areas.<sup>19</sup>

In 1974 nonmetro female mean earnings reached only \$3,952.00, 44 percent of the level for males.<sup>21</sup>

Lower earnings and higher concentration in secondary jobs may be further explained by the availability of part-time employment in these occupations.<sup>22</sup> There is relatively little difference in the number of women seeking part-time jobs in metro and nonmetro areas although the nonmetro rate, at 23.6 percent, is slightly above the metro rate of 21.6 percent. However, of all the women who are actually employed, 30.7 percent of nonmetro and 26.2 percent of metro women are on part-time schedules.<sup>23</sup> This difference occurs because a greater percentage of nonmetro women have been given reduced working hours due to economic conditions.<sup>24</sup>

Although working full 40-hour weeks, nonmetro women have greater opportunities as casual workers, that is dropping in and out of the labor force at various

Table 2. Distribution of Employment and Employment Growth by Occupation, Metro, Nonmetro 1960-1970.

Occupation	Metro				Nonmetro			
	Distribution of Employment		Change in Employment	Distribution of Increase	Distribution of Employment		Change in Employment	Distribution of Increase
	1960	1970	60-70		1960	1970	60-70	
	%	%	#	%	%	%	#	%
Total	100	100	6,250,285	100	100	100	1,747,541	100
Prof./Tech.	12.9	15.1	1,298,362	20.8	13.2	13.7	262,669	15.0
Manager/Adm.	3.6	3.4	186,760	3.0	4.0	3.7	47,382	2.7
Sales	7.8	7.0	324,005	5.2	8.1	6.3	14,676	.8
Clerical	32.7	35.5	2,678,042	42.8	20.7	24.3	612,978	35.1
Crafts	1.3	1.6	161,921	2.6	1.0	1.9	80,435	4.6
Operatives	14.9	11.7	233,298	3.7	16.9	17.7	352,273	20.2
Laborers	.5	.8	103,486	1.7	.6	1.3	55,273	3.2
Farmer	.2	.1	-12,931	*	1.6	.6	-43,235	*
Other Farm Wk.	.4	.3	-14,098	*	3.3	1.2	-88,066	*
Service	12.7	14.2	1,133,791	18.1	15.8	18.2	443,950	25.4
PHH*	7.0	3.1	-426,038	*	10.6	5.3	-185,633	*
Not Reported	6.1	7.0	583,687	9.3	4.2	6.0	194,698	11.1

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1960 and 1970.

\*PHH is defined as Private Household Workers.

The types of jobs which women are entering in nonmetro areas have implications for their job advancement and wages. Some clerical and many operative occupations are often thought of as "dead end" secondary jobs. "The primary sector offers high wages and formal job hierarchies, while jobs in the secondary sector pay low wages and offer little chance for advancement."<sup>20</sup> A greater proportion of nonmetro than metro females are entering into these secondary type jobs. Metro area women are making slightly greater strides toward professional and managerial careers. From 1970 to 1974 the mean earnings of employed nonmetro females actually declined by \$197.00, while earnings for non-metro males increased by \$354.00. While earnings for all metro residents decreased, metro females losses were smaller (\$154.00) than nonmetro female losses.

times during the year, having no firm commitment to one particular job. Seasonal employment, such as agricultural work, provides just such an opportunity. In 1975 about 9 percent of all hired farm workers were women whose chief occupation was housework, but who worked in the fields during the harvest season.<sup>25</sup>

Besides casual work, the types of jobs which women are taking have further implications for the steadiness of employment, particularly during adverse business conditions. As recessionary pressures mounted from the fourth quarter of 1974 to the first quarter of 1975, total employment in nonmetro areas declined by about 1.4 million. About 40 percent of this employment decline was attributed to females. During this period the unemployment rate for women, which was tradition-

ally higher than that of nonmetro men, climbed from 7 percent to 10.5 percent, while the rate for men increased from 4.4 percent to 8.4 percent. At the same time, a greater number of women dropped out of the labor force than did men. Twice as many women as men indicated that they dropped out of the labor force because they were unable to find jobs.<sup>26</sup>

Probably most interesting to note, however, was the employment change in manufacturing from late 1974 to the end of 1976. While total nonmetro employment increased during this time period by 1,317,000, manufacturing employment actually declined by 80,000.<sup>27</sup> Other studies show that manufacturing's share of national employment:

Dropped from 30 percent in 1947 to less than 24 percent in 1970. While manufacturing is still the largest single employer of any industry, by 1985 the trade and services (per se) industries are expected to equal or exceed manufacturing's share of employment. And of the ten industries projected to show the largest increases in number of jobs to 1985, all are nonmanufacturing, and only one--construction--is in the general goods producing

sector. The employment increases in these industries--led by state and local government, business services, trade, and health services--are expected to account for over 83 percent of the additional jobs in the total economy between 1968 and 1985.<sup>28</sup>

While contributing to the trend of increasing labor force participation, nonmetro females are entering into secondary jobs in a declining industry, adversely affected by changes in general economic conditions. Nonmetro areas are witnessing tremendous increases in the number of women employed but these increases have resulted in greater concentrations of females in clerical, operative, and service related occupations. This "crowding" of nonmetro females into low paying jobs partially explains the decline in average earnings levels between 1970 and 1974. However, the increased labor force participation during the period has, no doubt, contributed positively to higher family incomes and provided females with some measure of financial independence and self actualization outside the home. Yet, long term continuation of employment in secondary jobs can become a detriment, rather than an asset, to the status of women desiring increased career potential.

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Women sorting and crating peaches, Purcellville, Virginia. August, 1917 (Courtesy, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

## WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

by

Darla Fera\*

"Women make a more important contribution to agriculture than they do to any other single industry."

Henry A. Wallace

From America's aboriginal past to today's world of agribusiness, women have shared in the labor and made important contributions to the growth of American agriculture. In pre-Colonial America, Indian women were often landowners and planters; men cleared the land, hunted and engaged in warfare.<sup>1</sup> Historically, women's roles as agriculturists came into particular focus during the settlement of America's frontier West. In this pioneering period, farm wives not only fulfilled the traditional role as housewives and mothers but also carried out expected chores such as tending vegetable and flower gardens, caring for poultry, and aiding in the production of butter, cheese, and other foodstuffs. But pioneer life dictated that women contribute even more, and it was not uncommon to see females engaged in field labor--in plowing, planting, and harvesting. Early pioneer women thus made a vital and substantial contribution to the economy and sustenance of the farm family and to the growth of the nation.

Personally and collectively, women have distinguished themselves in other agricultural activities. Throughout American history, they rose to the occasion when, through personal tragedy or war, men were removed from the farms. Women then assumed the title and responsibilities of land proprietors and farm managers. Through slavery, as migrants, and in the Women's Land Army, females served as a ready supply of farm labor. They also provided labor in agriculturally related industries. Countless farm women made valuable contributions to themselves and to their communities by forming a myriad of rural organizations. And, especially in the twentieth century, women distinguished themselves as agricultural innovators, scientists and educators.

Despite their many participatory efforts, however, women have not been treated well through historical inquiry.<sup>2</sup> At best, coverage of their activities has frequently been sketchy and meagre--perhaps a mention and, at most, a few pages of commentary. Investigations into the study of women's activities and contributions to American agriculture add validity to these statements. Although research leads to a wide range of possible sources and subject areas, much data is incomplete or elusive as a result of our past failure to encourage women to preserve their memoirs, diaries, papers and documents, to contribute these

records to suitable archives, or to publish. Recently, of course, the task of studying women's history, including agricultural history, is being facilitated as more attention is being accorded to women's input into history. This increased interest is reflected in more primary source material coming to light and an increase in the frequency of publications on women's activities.

This paper is an effort to encourage the reading and writing of the history of women in agriculture. Its object is to offer a commentary on the availability of literature to researchers. For convenience, the contents are divided into two categories: the first or General section covers historical monographs, newspapers, periodicals, and aids; the second section is oriented toward topical literature, *i.e.*, publications on female agricultural labor, home economics, etc. Since this paper is a by-product of a recently compiled bibliography on women in agriculture that is to be published by the National Agricultural Library in the fall/winter period of 1977, it is suggested that interested persons desiring a more thorough coverage of the topic may wish to acquire the upcoming bibliography.

### General

Large volume, general histories of America or American agriculture contain only minor references to women in agriculture. One noteworthy exception are books concerning a specific type of agriculture that has traditionally been attractive to women. R. Selitzer's book, *The Dairy Industry in America* (New York: Books for Industry, 1977, 514 pp.) is one example. The author, in this instance, devotes extensive coverage to women throughout his discussion of this important industry.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the various agricultural colleges, and numerous state extension centers have always been interested in the problems and activities of farm women. The National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Maryland, houses an impressive collection of these documents. These materials include such subjects as instructions for women in the fields, advice on how to process food, and tips on becoming involved in farm marketing and cooperative endeavors.

Within the various trade journals, business magazines, and newspapers that comprise the agricultural press, exists a veritable treasure house of materials. Many of the periodicals contain special sections consisting of articles by and for farm women. Some farm journals print diary excerpts and memoirs. Others advise farm wives and offer an avenue for an exchange of information. Several journals, the *Farm Journal* in particular, pay tribute each year to an outstanding woman farmer. Unfortunately for the researcher, most of these journals are not indexed, making it extremely difficult to acquire and evaluate the information available.

Historical and other academic journals comprise another group of periodical literature that offers occasional articles of interest to investigators. Since most scholarly journals are indexed, access may

\*Darla Fera, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

be gained either through individual numbers, occasionally through a merged volume index, or by searching abstract journals such as *America: History and Life*. Additional sources providing valuable access points to scholarly journals are the *Western Historical Quarterly* and the *American Historical Review*, both of which include as regular features concise listings of recently published articles in selected journals. The majority of journals covered in these listings are of a historical nature, but other journals are not excluded.

Many popular magazines and newspapers include articles about women in agriculture. Mostly they reflect "trendy" developments or the unusual. The coverage, of course, is sporadic, and depends upon the "news worthiness" or reader interest appeal of the event. Nevertheless, researchers who demonstrate perseverance will find rewarding experiences in searching the newspapers of the rural communities of America.

The ideal finding aids for tracing the happenings of women in agriculture are bibliographies. Two are especially pertinent on this topic: C. R. Green, "Lists of References on Women in Agriculture," *Special*



(Photo by Rural Electrification Administration; courtesy of Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

*Libraries* 10: 138-145, June 1919, and A. C. True, "Published Sources of Information About Farm Women," *Proceedings, Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations* 30: 90-107, 1916. Citations are also frequently included in more varied bibliographies of women, in applicable monographs, and in journal articles.



Milford, Delaware. An egg circle--grading and packing the eggs. April 23, 1919 (Courtesy Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture).

#### Topical Literature

Many general collections concerning women in American history or women at work in America sadly neglect the importance of agriculture. Numerous authors detailing the employment trends of rural females do not consider agriculture to be labor. This omission could, in part, be explained by the fact that most women engaged in agricultural pursuits do not receive wages. They work on family farms, and their labor has not been translated into economic values.<sup>3</sup> The reason for the oversight has apparently been that women's tasks on the farm have not been accepted as a marketable commodity, but merely as an extension of the farm-home responsibility. The rise of the feminist movement has, and should, prompt additional studies in this area. Of historical interest, however, are: W. Drysdale, *Helps for Ambitious Girls* (New York: C. Rowell, 1900, 505 pp.); V. Penny, *Employments of Women . . .* (Boston: Walker, Wise, and Co., 1863, 500 pp.); and J. C. Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1938, 426 pp.)

As the result of a continuing interest in slavery and migrant labor, chroniclers have demonstrated more interest in women toiling in the fields under these conditions. The literature on slave labor often includes a discussion of women as part of the broader alliance with the slave family. Throughout many of the accounts, the distinction is made between the domestic and the field labor of women. Gerda Lerner's book, *Black Women in White America: A Documentary*

*History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, 630 pp.), is but one example of a scholar's effort to tell the story of women working in servitude. Much slave literature abounds with memoirs and personal accounts of slaves and, in many of which, women tell of their experiences. There is also a perennial reworking of the material concerning the slave family and environment and, hopefully, new light will be shed on women's contributions in the fields in future studies.<sup>4</sup>

As in the case of slave labor, the plight of female migrant labor is also discussed in terms of the family. There exists a wealth of information on this topic, replete with historical statistics, personal data, and photographs of the migrant family; occasionally, these materials relate the specific input of individual family members. Since the topic has proven to be of interdisciplinary interest, the most prolific of publishers, the Federal government, has become involved, especially through the U.S. Commission on Migratory Labor. Numerous organizations and individuals have also published data. A review of the literature, however, indicates that additional work needs to be done with an eye towards the specific labor problems and needs of migrant women outside the family situation.

The Women's Land Army, comprised of volunteers for seasonal war-time work (World Wars I and II), is another example of women serving the labor needs of American agriculture. As in the case of the subject areas of slavery and migrant labor, materials on the Women's Land Army are plentiful. For example, for propaganda and recruitment literature during World War I, one should see *The Farmerette*, the official organ of the Camp Standards of the Women's Land Army, New York, and other publications of state Land Army committees. One can also refer to the publications of the individual training camps, of agricultural colleges and universities, and many of the popular magazines and newspapers of the day (*Independent*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Country Gentleman* are a few representatives).

During World War II the Women's Land Army became a federally coordinated program. Existing archival files and the existence of published documents has resulted in a number of works of substance. Wayne D. Rasmussen, for example, authored *A History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program, 1943-1947* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1951, 298 pp.), but one should also see M. R. Lingenfelter, *Wartime Jobs for Girls* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1943, 226 pp.). The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service issued valuable publications, some of which are complete with statistical information and pictures of some of the participants.

Although literature on the American West abounds, women have seldom been assigned an important role in the expansion of the national population across the plains. With women's history becoming increasingly important in the curriculum of many universities, new emphasis is now being placed on the role of the female in the pioneering-homesteading environment. The literature is not abundant but, within the past fifteen years, more extensive and singular historical coverage of women as homesteaders or partners in a pioneering experience has been made available. There

are a substantial number of volumes existing, for example, of women's recollections, diaries, letters, etc., which detail their encounters with pioneer life. State historical societies have, in recent years, increased efforts to publish personal accounts of women's contributions to state history. This is particularly true of the various societies in the western states.

Of the recognized occupations, the field of home economics or domestic science has long been dominated by female employees. Sources for study date to the 19th century with the organization of home economics curriculums at the several land grant colleges. Histories of such colleges, as well as individual biographical sketches of employees can prove useful and, on occasion, may be located in university archives. Published school histories may serve as an alternative, as illustrated by R. G. Moore, *Field of Rich Toil: The Development of the University of Illinois College of Agriculture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970, 266 pp.). Many state agricultural extension centers also demonstrate a great deal of interest in this field as aids for women on the farm. Caution must be exercised in the use of this material, however, for it is primarily directed to farm women as wives and mothers, and to gardening and food processing. The use of the materials is consequently limited more to technological developments than to the role of women.

Women serving in the classroom as educators and purveyors of agriculturally related information is a recent phenomenon. The journal *Agriculture Education*, dating to 1929, chronicles this healthy innovation with countless articles discussing the increase in females as both teachers and pupils.

The literature detailing women's rural organizations provides a fertile area for historical investigation. The published by-laws and minutes of many associations aid in assessing the extent and value of the organization to the rural home and community. Many associations also publish material to assist the farm woman in agricultural work, and in her role as wife and mother. Organizations like the National Farm and Garden Association, or the Women's Silk Culture Association, concentrate more on agricultural pursuits than do the women's clubs. In a more contemporary trend, especially since the institution and growth of agribusiness, are the creation of viable political lobbies formed by farm women. Illustrative of several such bodies are Women for the Survival of Agriculture (WSAM), located in Michigan, and Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE). Organizations such as these bear watching for future chronicling.

For information on women in agriculturally related industries, the U.S. Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor is a prime source. A perusal of the Bureau's card catalog file reveals Bureau bulletins about women workers in canneries, processing plants, meat-packing houses, and the like. Arno Press in New York has recently begun reprinting selected Women's Bureau bulletins as part of a series entitled "American Farmers and the Rise of Agribusiness." And a number of individual studies exist relating to the female-industry relationship, several of which are agriculturally related industries.

Women have always played an integral, if at times not very visible, part in American agriculture. Yet, with the exception of a few such as Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Mary Engle Pennington and Martha Van Renssalaer, not many women agriculturists are well known. Hundreds of stories and histories remain still to be told. Literature and archival materials are available. What is now needed is the annalist, the oral historian, and the biographer with sufficient interest to tell the story of women's contributions to American agriculture.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. A. F. C. Wallace, "Women, Land, and Society: Three Aspects of Aboriginal Delaware Life," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* 17 (Spring 1947): 1-35.
2. Eva Moseley, "Women in Archives: Documenting the History of Women in America," *American Archivist* 36 (April 1973): 215-222.
3. For a new look at this problem see W. E. Huffman, "The Value of the Production Time of Farm Wives: Iowa, North Carolina, and Oklahoma," *American Journal of Farm Economics* 58 (December 1976): 836-841.
4. See Minnie Miller Brown, "Black Women in American Agriculture," *Agricultural History* 50 (January 1976): 202-212.



Taken from *American Farmer*, 3, 1 (May 1841).

## BOOK REVIEWS

Craven, Avery O., *RACHEL OF OLD LOUISIANA*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975, xiv + 122 pp., \$6.95.)

Some readers will find this book inspiring; others, depressing. All, however, will thank Avery Craven for telling the story, from several hundred family letters, of Rachel O'Connor, widowed mistress of an antebellum Louisiana cotton plantation. Though lacking the usual footnoted evidences of scholarship, this is a fine case study in which Craven's sure historical sense places Rachel's individual experience in the proper background of southern economic and social life.

Rachel O'Connor was twice widowed by the time she was forty-eight. Alone in the world, she managed her plantation for two decades, skillfully enough to leave an estate of \$33,000 at her death. The harsh realities of southern rural life are emphasized again and again in her letters. Disease and death were ever present; one can seldom turn three pages without reading of the sickness or death of a neighbor, relative, or valued slave. The pressure of debt was constant and vexing, and Rachel was hounded for more than a decade by her dead brother's creditors.

The slave system itself presented perpetual cares. Although Rachel treated her own slaves as human beings and never had serious trouble with discipline, the neighborhood was full of the rumor and reality of slave plots, runaways, and resistance. Finding a reliable overseer was an apparently hopeless task. After dismissing three whites in succession, Rachel finally placed one of her own slaves in charge of the plantation with very satisfactory results.

Craven's emphasis is on the individual story of Rachel O'Connor's troubled life, but he does allow himself a final speculation that the slave system was beginning to unravel and might have disappeared without a war. The book is excellently produced by Louisiana State University Press; its one minor flaw is the omission of a local map.

Reviewed by James H. Broussard, Southwest Texas State University. (Ed. note: Reprinted with permission from *Agricultural History*, vol. 51, no. 2, April 1976.)

Hargreaves, Mary W. M., "Women in the Agricultural Settlement of the Northern Plains," *Agricultural History*, vol. 50, no. 1, January 1976, pp. 179-189. Schwieder, Dorothy, "Labor and Economic Roles of Farm Wives in Iowa, 1840-1880." Paper given at the 1977 National Archives Conference, "Farmers, Bureaucrats and Middlemen: Historical Perspectives on American Agriculture," April 1977. Proceedings for this conference are in preparation for publication at this time.

The literature of American homesteading in the farm sector of the Great Plains abounds with material in praise of the frontiersman. Well known is this farmer's stereotyped image of a strong-willed, resourceful, hard-working individualist. But what of his partner in this enterprise? What of the farm woman on the Plains? In these two selections, both Mary Hargreaves and Dorothy Schwieder seek to complement the body of literature devoted to the agricultural settlement of the Plains with a "view from the ladies."

Dorothy Schwieder's essay emerges from the current efforts, largely sponsored by state historical societies, to encourage the preservation and publication of farm women's diaries, letters, and memoirs. The majority of the author's conclusions are based upon such personal accounts, plus various entries to an essay contest entitled: "The Story of My Grandmother." Most of this material is housed at the Iowa Historical Society.

Besides performing admirably, under adverse and unfamiliar conditions, the expected tasks of house keeping, child raising, and cooking and food preparation, the farm woman's list of duties was not complete. Schwieder emphasizes the role of the Iowa farm wife as an agriculturalist: seldom engaged in farm labor, she was more often seen tending vegetable and flower gardens, caring for poultry, and processing butter and cheese. To illustrate the farm wife's important, and frequently vital, economic input to the family income, the author discusses, through examples, women taking in sewing, housing boarders, selling homemade goods, and providing other services such as schoolteaching and midwifery. Dorothy Schwieder's ultimate conclusion that these Iowa farm wives were both comfortable and competent in performing all their duties, follows well from her numerous examples cited.

Mary Hargreaves' article differs in scope, both geographically and in terms of the type of women studied, from that of Dorothy Schwieder. Hargreaves describes the life led by women, not all of whom were farm wives -- many homesteaded alone in the Northern Plains, in the areas which included Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming. Like Schwieder, Hargreaves describes the life of women in agricultural settlements as one of intense hardships and unaccustomed discomforts. It was a life much different from that of their sisters, or even their own lives, back East. The author, however, broadens her discussion of farm women by inclusion of a brief assessment of their impact outside the farm and farm-related activities. For example, she discusses women's suffrage as affected by the presence and sentiments of women on the Northern Plains. Similar to Schwieder, she mentions the role of women who, as agents of socialization, were activists in organizing schools and churches.

Mary Hargreaves suggests in her article that the diaries and letters of farm women, upon which so much of our present knowledge of their activities are based, were written by the better (than average) educated individuals with the time and incentive to write. If this is true, then the question of how representative of all farm women are these personal accounts, is logically raised. It would prove very interesting to hear Schwieder's comments on this problem.

Reviewed by Darla Fera, Agricultural History Group,  
Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of  
Agriculture.

Schob, David E., *HIRED HANDS AND PLOWBOYS: FARM LABOR IN THE MIDWEST, 1815-60*. (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1975. 329 pp., \$10.95.)

From the first axe-bite by a Scandinavian woodsman in clearing an area of primal forest, David Schob reconstructs the role of hired labor in transforming the wilderness of the American Midwest from 1815 to 1860 into the extremely productive farmland it is today. Through a rich variety of sources, Schob documents the parts played by the diverse ethnic and cultural groups, represented in the "for hire" segment of society, that contributed so heavily to the development of the area. In piecing together a thorough account of those farmers who, because they were somewhat better off, employed laborers in the clearing and operations of farming on the frontier, Schob calls on sources ranging from newspapers, government documents, and printed matter to diaries, account ledgers, and state and local histories.

The author's method of reconstruction is to trace the evolution of pioneer farms in the Midwest, beginning the story with the initial carving out of the forest or sod-breaking on the prairie. Farm hands first found work felling and removing trees and underbrush, while those on the prairie found employment breaking the sod for prospective farmers. After the initial clearing of the land, laborers often found jobs teamstering the farmer, his family, and their supplies to the newly cleared site. Workers fortunate enough to own a wagon and team could continue to work for the farmer by hauling loads to and from distant market places.

When the farm site became operational, farmers continued to require the services of hired hands. Farm labor was needed to augment the farmer and his family in the processes of planting and harvesting. The fall harvest was the most critical to the farmer in terms of labor. Crops ripened quickly in the fall and if not harvested rapidly, because of a shortage of labor, it might mean financial ruin for the farmer. As a result, wages for farm hands rose, sometimes doubled, during the critical harvest period.

Schob deals with the role of women in this frontier environment in two capacities. Throughout the book there is the recognition that wives and daughters worked as hard, or harder, than the farmer did in the operation of the farm. Females were responsible for feeding hungry harvesting crews three or four times a day as well as doing mending and laundry chores.

These services were often provided at no cost because they reduced the amount of cash outflow for labor. (Payment in goods or surplus crops were other methods of reducing the amount of cash outflow.) Daughters of courting age provided added advantages for farmers in attracting a sufficient supply of agricultural labor. Courtship between a daughter and a hired hand was often deemed preferable because the farmer was able to observe, over a period of time, the qualities displayed in the future husband, particularly the all-important skills of farming.

In a separate chapter Schob discusses the role of the hired girl. Though most females hired on as adjuncts to the farm wife helping in the general chores of the house, many women became hired hands in their own right, filling the same positions as their male counterparts though at lower wages. Schob quotes from ledgers recording where payments were made to women in clearing land, teamstering, and in harvesting. Females from surrounding towns and urban centers participated fully on the labor-scarce frontier in helping farms to become established.

*Hired Hands and Plowboys*, in successive chapters, examines the culture of farm life for the hired hand, his knowledge of growing and farming techniques, his part in the family life of the farm, and his place in a frontier society. Though it offers no analysis of the world it describes, the book does an excellent job of reconstructing a little-known part of early American economic life--the role of the hired hand.

Reviewed by Tom Fulton, Agricultural History Group/ERS  
U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## NEWS NOTES

### Meetings

The annual meeting of the Associates NAL, Inc., was held on September 23, 1977, at the National Agricultural Library. At that time, Dr. Rasmussen, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate of new officers: President, C. S. Shaffner; Vice-President, Ted Byerly; Recording Secretary, Donna Fusonie; Treasurer, Harry Trelogan.

Each year The Associates NAL, Inc. honors outstanding performances in three different categories. Those honored must be nominated for this special attention by their exceptional contributions to the improvement of the agricultural library system and its literature. The Award takes the form of a bronze medallion.

The three categories are: (1) PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD for any published contribution to library literature or meritorious accomplishment in the library science field. *Eligibility:* Open to agricultural/biological librarians and to members of the Associates NAL, Inc.

(2) CITATION OF SPECIAL RECOGNITION for special achievement and/or service given to the National Agricultural Library, to other agricultural libraries, or significant achievements leading to the advancement of the library science field. *Eligibility:* Open to concerned individuals and organizations in the agricultural field, NAL staff, and the Associates NAL, Inc.

(3) DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD recognizes and encourages meritorious performance exceeding job requirements at the National Agricultural Library. *Eligibility:* Open to all members of the National Agricultural Library Staff.

This year not enough nominations were received for the categories of Professional Achievement and Distinguished Service Awards. The Citation of Special Recognition, however, was awarded to Charles L. Gilreath of Texas A & M University for his *Cain Online User's Guide* and his work on AGRICOLA.

Gilreath received his B.A., M.A., and M.L.S. from the University of Texas at Austin in 1967, 1969, and 1973 respectively. He has done graduate work toward a Ph.D. in Educational Administration at Texas A & M University and is currently employed in the University Library as reference librarian and coordinator of Automated Information Retrieval Service.

As special projects he developed in 1975 a course for online training in the AGRICOLA data base and has taught this course several times at the National Agricultural Library during 1975-77. To supplement the course he developed two audiovisual presentations on AGRICOLA in 1976. During 1976-77 he was a co-investigator on the Sorghum-Millet Current Awareness Project, sponsored by the National Agricultural Library and the Agency for International Development. Among his publications are *CAIN Online User's Guide*. Washington, D.C.: National Agricultural Library, 1976, and

"Library Faculty Evaluation: The Texas A & M Case," with Doris Hayashikawa and others, *Texas Library Journal*, 51 (Summer, 1975), pp. 68-71.

Nominations for the 1978 awards will be due May 31, 1978, and should be mailed to Mrs. Barbara J. Williams, Box 1565, South Carolina State College, Orangeburg, South Carolina 29115. Each nomination should include the following information: (1) Name of the award for which the candidate is proposed, (2) a brief statement of the basis of the nomination and, where appropriate, a bibliography which supports the nomination.

### Women in Agriculture

Two groups of women met recently in the Midwest. A newly formed group called WIFE, for Women Involved in Farm Economics, held a convention in October 1977 in Sydney, Nebraska. Their mission is similar in nature to that of the American Agri-Women, the latter group who met from November 9 to 11, 1977, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. In the past, farm wives have traditionally formed "auxillaries" that mainly served coffee and cake and enjoyed tours while old-line male-dominated farm organizations convened on matters of farm policy. These women, however, gathered with a different mission.

The American Agri-Women is a national umbrella organization that was formed about three years ago to bring together groups that had been developing independently at the state level since the controversial price freezes and consumer boycotts of 1973. It has become one of the newest and fastest growing women's movements in the country and promises to add a powerful new voice to agricultural politics. Over 220 delegates from 33 states, representing a membership now totalling over 3,000, attended the Third Annual Convention, a three day series of meetings, to discuss their problems and form a national program for action.

The American Agri-Women adopted several goals. First, it wanted to remove the stigma of the farmer as being uninformed and illiterate for, in fact, many farmers and their wives are college graduates and have to be well-educated in order to keep abreast of world economics and political developments. The women not only work side by side with their husbands in the fields and stock pens, but also they must keep the record books, buy supplies, share in decision making, and help deal with bankers in order to obtain the monumental loans needed to keep a modern farm in operation. Secondly, the organization wanted to assure the survival of the family farm as a way of life which, at present, seems threatened by hard times, low prices, and high debts. The American Agri-Women believes that it can promote unity among farmers and provide needed support in the fight for more favorable farm policy legislation.

### General

#### Two Symposiums Held at the National Agricultural Library

As world population continues to increase, the food

processing nations are being asked to increase their agricultural output. In this regard, agricultural librarians and documentalists play a vital role by providing the necessary informational services to the many farmers, livestock producers, agribusiness organizations, research workers, subject specialists, teachers, students, and others who are actively engaged in programs to meet the continuing challenge of man, food, and hunger.

It was in this spirit that the National Agricultural Library (NAL) in cooperation with the Associates NAL, Inc. sponsored two important symposiums this fall. Both symposiums brought together many speakers from various fields who offered papers and commentaries on computer assisted access to bibliographic information. Participants included authorities from public and private organizations of both national and international scope.

The first symposium, entitled "Computerized Literature Data Files in Agriculture: A Symposium in Honor of the One Millionth Citation in the AGRICOLA (Formerly CAIN) Data Base," was held on Friday, October 21, 1977. Approximately 12 papers were presented by representatives from government and private enterprise, including land-grant college libraries as well as libraries from England and Holland. The papers were diverse and wide-ranging in opinion with several speakers calling for more cooperation and resource sharing on an international as well as a national basis. The papers will be published by the Associates NAL, Inc., in 1978.

The second symposium, entitled "A Symposium on International Agricultural Librarianship: Continuity and Change," was held at the National Agricultural Library on Friday, November 4, 1977. This symposium was held in honor of Foster E. Mohrhardt, former Director of NAL, for his many contributions to agricultural librarianship. Both Richard A. Farley, Director, and John Sherrod, former Director, of NAL, were present for this tribute. Approximately 18 papers were presented, including introductory remarks, major presentations, panelists' commentaries, closing remarks, and other papers which could not be delivered in person. These papers will be published in 1978 by Greenwood Press. In addition, participating organizations set up exhibit tables to highlight NAL's Bibliography of Agriculture, Agrindex and the AGRIS network, the Oberly Awards for excellence in agricultural librarianship, and changes in library storage (including microforms and computer tapes). In the evening, an excellent dinner in the Reference Room served as a finale to a most rewarding day.

While honoring the past, both symposiums focused on libraries and information retrieval to meet world needs in the years of scarcity ahead. Charles L. Gilreath of Texas A & M University spoke on effective training at the first symposium. The speakers at both symposiums emphasized the emerging role of computer assisted access to bibliographic information and the complementary need for greater cooperation in all phases of the automated process among the many bibliographic data bases.

#### Conference on Food and Famine

Dr. Alan Fusonie, Historian at the National Agricultural Library, presented a paper entitled "Food as the

Foundation of Civilization: The Gathering Process to Mechanized Production" at North Dakota's Conference on Food and Famine held in Bismarck, N.D. on December 5, 1977.

#### UPCOMING MEETINGS

##### Annual Meeting of the Agricultural History Society

The Agricultural History Society will hold its annual meeting in New York City on April 14, 1978. For further information, please contact:

Dr. Wayne Rasmussen, Head  
Agricultural History Group  
U.S.D.A. Economic Research Service  
Washington, D.C. 20250

##### Symposium on Southern Agriculture

Mississippi State University, in cooperation with the Agricultural History Society and the Economic Research Service, U.S.D.A., will sponsor a symposium entitled "Southern Agriculture Since the Civil War." The symposium will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Mississippi State and will be held June 21-23, 1978. For additional information, please contact:

Dr. Wayne Rasmussen, Head  
Agricultural History Group  
U.S.D.A. Economic Research Service  
Washington, D.C. 20250

#### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

##### Women and Agriculture

In press: *Women in American Agriculture--A Select Bibliography* by Darla Fera, Agricultural History Group, USDA. Prepared by the Economic Research Service and the National Agricultural Library, U.S. Department of Agriculture, November 1977. Library List No. 103. The list contains some 200 references concerning the activities of women throughout American history which should prove useful to scholars, researchers, and the general public.

*Mothers of the South: Portraiture of the White Tenant Farm Woman* by Margaret Jarman Hagood. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: 1939; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977) 252 pp.

*Daughters of the Country: The Women of the Fur Traders and Mountain Men* by Walter O'Meara. 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968) 368 pp. Bibliog.

*Annotated Bibliography of Women in Rural America*; with a review of the literature about women in rural America, bibliography of women in rural areas world-wide, and resource material by Linda Joyce. (University Park, Pa.: Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1976) 62 leaves.

*Rural Women Workers in the 20th Century; An Annotated Bibliography* by Collette H. Moser, Deborah Johnson. (East Lansing: Center for Rural Manpower and Public Affairs, Michigan State University, 1973. Special Paper No. 15) 63 leaves.

*Daughters of the Promised Land: Women in American History* by Page Smith. 1st ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1970) 392 pp.

*Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* by Barbara Welter. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976) 230 pp. Bibliog. Refs.

#### Other Works

*Quarterly Bulletin of the International Association of Agricultural Librarians and Documentalists*. Richard A. Farley, Editor-in-Chief. V. 22, #2, 1977, published in November 1977. This issue features articles about the AGRIS data base.

*A Bibliography of Land and Natural Resource Information Systems*. Monticello, Ill.: Council of Planning Librarians, 1976. 24 pp.

*North American Forest and Conservation History: A Bibliography*. Santa Barbara: A.B.C.-Clio Press, 1977. 408 pp. Index.

*The Winterthur Museum Libraries Collection of Printed Books and Periodicals*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1974. Nine volumes. General, rare book, and auction catalogues, and Shaker collection.

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